

Postmodernism in and the Mountain Echoed

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the elements of postmodernism in *And the Mountain Echoed*. Through the characters of Mrs. Nila Wahdhati and Mr. Wahdhati, author depicts the characteristics of post modernism. It is the story of Afghanistan. As we know Afghanistan is completely under the Taliban in present era, it is also based on that experience, that time when Afghanistan was under Taliban. It was suffering from internal war, anxiety and class and caste system, religious orthodox and religious tension which we can see in the present also. Khaled portrays his characters lively, they look real, their pain, suffering, challenges in their life. This paper deals with the perception, ideas, and opinions. In this paper researcher discusses the writing style of Khaled, his characters depiction and his thoughts which he presents through his work *And the Mountain Echoed*. In this book, researcher encounters the elements of poverty, sacrifices and modernism through the characters.

Key Words : Postmodernism, War, Homosexuality, Socio-political condition, Alienation, Social Unrest

INTRODUCTION

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan- American novelist. He wrote three non-fiction work and one novella. He is famous for his first *The Kite Runner*, it is a semi-autobiographical work. His works focuses on aspects of Afghan Culture such as social conventions, religion, family tradition as well as negative aspects such as violence, marriages , economic discrimination, illiteracy, slavery, gender discrimination, war, homosexuality, sexual harassments, rapes, and the problem of migration. Khaled investigates the socio- political situation as well as the living situations of the poor and the working classes. The present study deals socio-economic, socio-religious and socio-cultural situation of Afghanistan. It shows that how Afghanistan has been the power of victim of power politics.

The research explores through the analysis of texts : *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *And the Mountain Echoed*, *The Sea Prayer* about gender discrimination, caste marriage, forced marriage, Taliban's religious fundamentalism and the ideological, ethnic,

cultural, and gender differences among the people of Afghanistan.

The study also focus on that how the geopolitical tensions between the two world superpowers *i.e.* USSR and America in the wake of Cold War escalated conflicts and violence which untimely led to the insurgencies and instability in Afghanistan.

METHODOLOGY

Researcher uses qualitative research methodology. Researcher collected data from primary and secondary sources. It is a literary research on a fiction *And the Mountain Echoed*. Through this research, researcher will give an idea about Afghanistan. Sources will be primary and secondary.

Modernism:

In an era characterized by industrialization, the nearly global adoption of capitalism, rapid social change, and advances in science and the social sciences (e.g., Freudian theory), Modernists felt a growing alienation

incompatible with Victorian morality, optimism, and convention. New ideas in psychology, philosophy, and political theory kindled a search for new modes of expression. (<https://www.britannica.com/art/Modernism-art>)¹ After the Victorian Age, we see drastic change in the world. World faced world war-I and world war-II, harsh reality of the society.

Post- Modernism:

Post- Modernism is a term which was against modernism such seventeenth century to nineteenth century. Part of the postmodern answer is that the prevailing discourses in any society reflect the interests and values, broadly speaking, of dominant or elite groups. Postmodernists disagree about the nature of this connection; whereas some apparently endorse the dictum of the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx that “the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class,” others are more circumspect. Inspired by the historical research of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, some postmodernists defend the comparatively nuanced view that what counts as knowledge in a given era is always influenced, in complex and subtle ways, by considerations of power. There are others, however, who are willing to go even further than Marx. The French philosopher and literary theorist Luce Irigaray, for example, has argued that the science of solid mechanics is better developed than the science of fluid mechanics because the male-dominated institution of physics associates solidity and fluidity with the male and female sex organs, respectively. Similarly, the Bulgarian-born French psychoanalyst and writer Julia Kristeva has faulted modern linguistics for privileging aspects of language associated, in her psychoanalytic theory, with the paternal or paternal authority (rule systems and referential meaning) over aspects associated with the maternal and the body (rhythm, tone, and other poetic elements).²

If I hadn't spent so much time studying Earthlings,” said the Tralfamadorian, “I wouldn't have any idea what was meant by ‘free will.’ I've visited thirty-one inhabited planets in the universe, and I have studied reports on one hundred more. Only on Earth is there any talk of free will.”³

Socio- Political Condition:

The novel deals with the separation of a brother and sister but besides this it deals with alienation,

homosexuality, extra marital affairs, war, poverty and migration etc. In his work “And the Mountain Echoed,” he depicts Afghanistan's urgent and deplorable state. The narrative begins with the story of Baba Ayyub. The novel depicts the same scenario as earlier novels, including the state of the conflict, the Taliban's position, and the suffering of Afghans as a result of the war and Russian authority. In his earlier work, the author effectively shows Islamic philosophy. Due to poverty, Saboor, the father of Pari and Abdullah, sells his daughter. Saboor did not sell his boy since she was a girl child. Even Pari is younger than Abdullah, and poverty is a factor as well.

“Nader Shah had been shot and killed, and that Nader shah's son, young Zahir, had ascended to the throne. That was 1933. I could begin there, I suppose or somewhere else. A story is like a moving train : no matter where you hop onboard, you are bound to reach your destination sooner or later. But I suppose I ought to begin this tale with the same thing that ends it. Yes, I think it stands to reason that I bookend this account with NilaWahdati.”⁴

Nila and Pari fled Kabul for Paris. The conflict has dramatically altered people's lives and the city of Kabul. He is the one who defines war—

“I can sum it up one word; war or, rather, wars. Not one, not two, but many wars, both big and small, just and unjust, wars with shifting casts of supposed heroes and villains, each new hero making one increasingly nostalgic for the old villain. The names changed, as did the faces, and I spit on them equally for all the petty feuds, the snippers, the landmines, bombing raids, the rockets, the looting and raping and killing. Ah, enough! The task is both too great and too pleasant.”⁵

People have fled Kabul and Afghanistan as a result of the war. It was a depressing scenario. In Kabul, the conflict had changed everything, he said.

“the 1980s, as you, Mr. Marcos were actually not so terrible in Kabul since most of the Fighting took place in the countryside. Still, it was a time of exodus, and many family from our neighborhood packed their things and left the country for either Pakistan or Iran with hopes of resttling somewhere in the west.”⁶

These lines depict Afghanistan's catastrophic position. Rockets were feared by the public.

“It was in the 1990s that fighting at last broke out within the city limits ... the street where we lived, once so quiet and pristine and gleaming, turned into a war zone. Bullets hit every house. Rockets whistled overhead.

RPGS landed up and down the street and blasted craters in the asphalt.⁷

War had destroyed everything, including people's homes, valuables, and valuables, as well as plundering people and raping females. Afghans were bereft of joy in their lives. Through his work, the author describes these events. War and politics have an impact on a country. People were dying of hunger due to a lack of food.

"War was ruthless on the once beautiful house, windows shattered by nearby RPG blasts. A Rocket pulverized the wall on the eastern face of the garden as well as half of the veranda where Nila and I had held so many conversations. A grenade damaged the roof. Bullets scarred the walls."⁸

Afghanistan's situation, people's perspectives, and everything is changing. Taliban took over the abandoned homes. People are in need of food, housing, and employment.

"Then by then, the Taliban had been driven out by the Northern Alliance, and the Americans had come to Afghanistan. Thousands of aid workers were flocking to Kabul from all over the world to build clinics and schools, to repair road and irrigation canals, to bring food, shelter and jobs. In the week that Idris has been in Kabul, he has found this tone of light-hearted exasperation common among the foreign-aid workers, who've had to navigate the inconveniences and idiosyncrasies of Afghan culture. He is vaguely offend by this entitlement to cheerful mocking, this license to condescend, though the locals don't seem to take notice, or take it as an insult, if they do, and so he thinks he probably shouldn't either."⁹

Idris and Timur had also fled Kabul owing to the fighting and violence. Internal strife was also an important factor in people's decision to leave. Taliban assassinates Uzbeks, Hindus, and members of other ethnic groups. Women do not have the right to freedom. Roshi is a character that has suffered greatly as a result of the murder of her family. Her family was assassinated by a relative. Idris and Timur returned to Kabul to retrieve and sell his land. They don't reveal the true cause for their return.

"Timur does not share the real reason they have come back to Kabul: to reclaim the property that had belonged to their fathers, the house where both he and Idris had lived for the first fourteen years of their lives. The property's worth is skyrocketing now that thousands

of foreign-aid workers have descended on Kabul. And need a place to live. I didn't want her and turned, against both her will and nature, into one of those diligent, sad women who are bent on a life-long course of quite servitude, forever in fear of showing, saying, or doing the wrong thing. Women, who are admired by some in the west— here in France, for instance—turned into heroines for their hard lives, admired from a distance by those who couldn't bear even one day of walking in their shoes. Women who see their desires doused and their dreams renounced and yet ——— and this is the worst of it, Monseieur Boustouler-if you meet them, they smile and pretend they have no misgiving at all. As though they lead enviable lives. But you look closely and you see the helpless look, the desperation, and how it belies all their show of good humour. It is quite pathetic. I didn't want this for my daughter. Baba Jan had been shot twice by the Russians during battle."¹⁰

Through Mr. Whadati and Nabi, the cook and chauffer of Wahadtis fell in love with each other. Before that, Nabi fell in love with Nila with her beauty and mannerism of Nila. Due to circumstances and problems of his life, Mr. Suleiman Wahdati likes seclusion. Suleiman does not like to go outside and get-together with the people.

Alienation:

Alienation is one of the controversial terms that have number of definition in social sciences. Alienation is a major theme of human condition in epoch. Alienation is an approach in which you feel powerless, footlessness and full of sorry, melancholy. This statement shows the poverty of Saboor. Sometimes he took Abdullah along on his job. Saboor had lost his child Omar due to poverty. This statement proves above lines:

"If he had found more work, or better work, he could have bought the baby better winter clothes, heavier may be even a proper stove to warm house."¹¹

Due to lack of work, he can't purchase winter clothes for Omar, and he was died. Before this, Abdullah never went in a city. He never saw a real city, hustle bustle of the biggest and busy city. Due to poverty Saboor sold his daughter Pari to Wahdati . Kabul is a city full off traffic and cinemas. On the other hand Shadbagh is a village full of poverty, lack of water. Following lines explores the beauty or busy life of Kabul:

"Everywhere, he saw traffic lights, and teahouses, and restaurants, and glass-fronted shops with bright

multicolored signs. Cars rattling noisily down the crowded streets, hooting, darting narrowly among buses, pedestrians, and bicycles.¹²

Due to loneliness and seclusion Nila go to close Nabi but she is wife of Mr. Wahdati. These lines depict the frustration, anxiety, solitude and alienation. She betrays her husband with her chauffeur.

“ I longed to climb into the backseat beside her pull into my arms, to soothe her with kiss”¹³

“ she would pull up a chair to the window of her upstairs bedroom and plant herself there, smoking cigarettes, shaking one foot, staring out of the with a blank expression.¹⁴

Conclusion:

Through this paper, we get to know about the socio-political condition of Afghanistan. It finds out the problems of Existentialism, Alienation, Poverty, and gender inequality etc. For getting rid of all this we need a change in the mentality of the society. Afghanistan is a country of full of terrorism, it is affecting people and their personal life, their needs. Due to terrorism people are facing problems of alienation, depression and others.

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